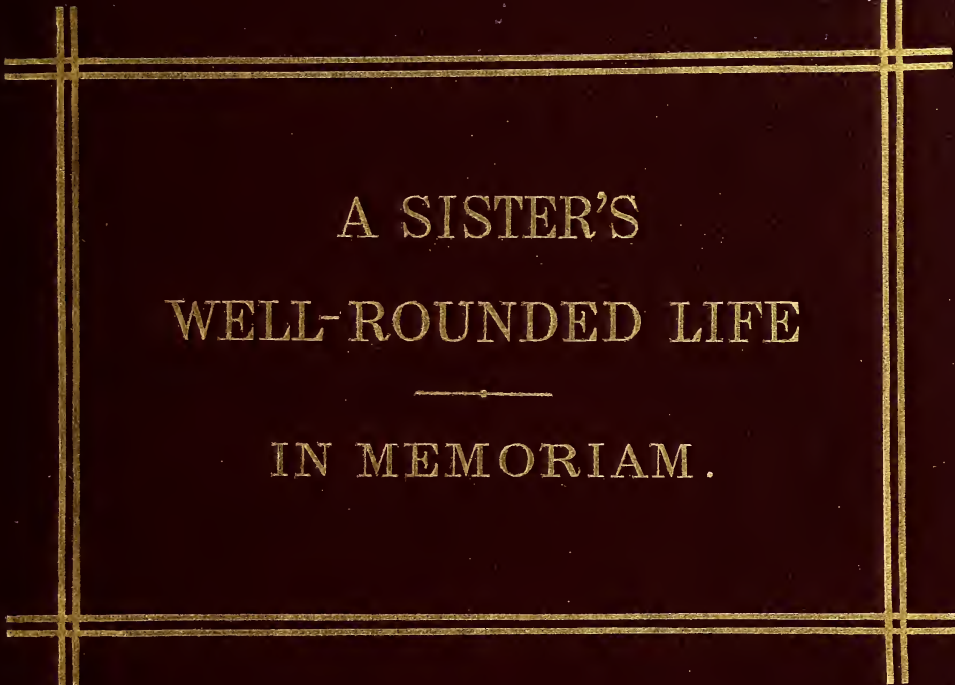


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A SISTER'S
WELL-ROUNDED LIFE
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THE pictures of MISS HALL are taken from some of the very few photographs in possession of her family. She was unusually averse to "sittings," and the pictures are, therefore, not as perfect as her friends may wish.



Maria A. Hall.

MY SISTER'S WELL-ROUNDED LIFE:
A MEMORIAL EPISTLE

ADDRESSED TO A FAMILY FRIEND

BY

A. OAKEY HALL.



NEW-YORK:
THOMAS WHITTAKER,
No. 2 BIBLE HOUSE.

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“It is an exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature that when the heart is touched and softened by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the ‘dead’ comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly. It would almost seem as though our better thoughts and sympathies were charms, in virtue of which the soul is enabled to hold some vague and mysterious intercourse with the spirits of those whom we dearly loved in life. Alas! how often and how long may those patient angels hover above us, watching for the spell which is so seldom uttered, and so soon forgotten!”

CHARLES DICKENS.

“ WHY must the flowers die ?
Prisoned they lie
In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.
O doubting heart !
They only sleep below
The soft, white, ermine snow,
While winter winds shall blow,
To breathe and smile upon you soon again ”

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

THIS little volume was originally printed for private circulation, but in compliance with requests, has been published.

MY DEAR DOCTOR:

I OBEY with exquisite pleasure your command for a long letter concerning my sister, who has "departed this life."

What a perfect phrase that is from the elder gravestones! How often I wish that the false word "died" could disappear from mention in the daily journals; together with—from every source—those gloomy paraphernalia that immediately follow or surround the dissolution of an "earthly tabernacle."

My sister was a gratified believer in the ideas best expressed by Longfellow,

"There is no death! what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death."

She commanded that no one should put on mourning. Her wishes were not only obeyed because expressed, but for the accompanying reason, that the aptness of the request was acknowledged by all of us.

We speak of her hourly, in feeling akin to that with which Charles Lamb remembered his sprightly neighbor, "Hester," in his poem of that name :

"—gone before,
To that unknown and silent shore :
Shall we not meet as heretofore,
Some summer morning ?"

I find this penciled in one of her books: "Those who fall asleep in Jesus are not lost to those who survive them; they are only parted from them for a time, to meet again, and to have that meeting at home. They are no more lost than a dear friend is, who goes home before us after we have sojourned at a distance, and whom we are soon to follow, and know where to find. But to our society, our counsels,

our plans, and our labors here below, they are lost, and the loss will be deeply and lastingly felt throughout mortal life, in proportion to the greatness of the excellencies by which they were in life distinguished and endeared.”

II.

My earliest recollection of Marcia was as a girl of three years (I about six), teaching me how to kneel upon a pillow, as little Samuel, and in imitation of the well-known scriptural picture ; and next after that, lisping some one of those sweet, childish prayers which seem to be suggestions from the other world.

She passed from mortality, whispering the prayer of the matured mind into my ear as I lay by her side, smoothing the hair that yet was as soft and beautiful as when, in those days of lisping infancy, it rippled into auburn tresses.

Thus early and late in her mortal life, she embalmed in prayer my filial remembrances.

As you well know, her daily life gave prayers for me and mine, and, may I be pardoned for adding, they have certainly been answered, under the most harassing circumstances and unforeseen complications.

One could summarize her whole object in life by using the word "prayer." Yet her communion with the better world was ever unobtrusive, and not set in a frame of this world's belongings, nor hung upon public walls.

Britain's poet-laureate has sweetly said,

"By prayer the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

My sister found her love of prayer intensified in these eloquent passages from Henry Ward Beecher :

"Consider what a heavenly wonder must be the Book of Prayer that lies before God! For groans are interpreted there. Mute joys gain tongue before God. Unutterable desires that go silently up from the heart burst forth into divine pleadings, when, touched by the Spirit, their imprisoned nature comes forth. Could thoughts or aspirations be made visible, could they assume a form that befitted their nature, what an endless procession would be seen going toward the throne

of God day and night ! Consider the wrestlings of all the wretched ; the cry of orphans ; the ceaseless pleadings of the bereaved and of those fearing bereavement ; the prayer of trust betrayed, of hope darkened, of home deserted, of joy quenched ; the prayers of faithful men from dungeons and prison-houses ; the prayers of slaves, who found man, law, and the church twined around and set against them, and had no way left to look but upward toward God ! Beds of long-lingering sickness have learned such thoughts of resignation, and such patient trust and joy, that the heavenly book is bright with the footprints of their prayers. The very silence of sickness is often more full of richer thoughts than all the books of earth have ever been. ‘ And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which *are the prayers of saints.*’ How grand is the thought that over all the earth, God’s angels have caught the heart’s breath, its prayers and love, and that in heaven they are before God like precious odors poured

from golden vases by saintly hands! The influences which are at work upon the soul in such a covert as the closet are not like the coarse stimulants of earthly thought. It is no fierce rivalry, no conflict for victory, no hope of praise, or hunger of fame that throws a lurid light upon the mind. The soul rises to its highest nature, and meets the influence that rests upon it from above. What is the depth of kindness, what is the vision of faith, what is the rapture, the ecstasy of love, the closet knows more grandly than any other place of human experience."

III.

Marcia was always a thorough student of the Bible. Now lies before me the little edition which she first owned in childhood. There is a library of its successors also. But the old volume was ever the favorite.

Amid all worldly scenes, she remembered that "Newton laid not his dying head on his *Principia*, but on his Bible; Cowper, not on his *Task*, but on his Testament; Robert Hall, not on his wide fame, but on his humble hope; Michael Angelo, not on that pencil which alone copied with the grandeurs of the 'Judgment,' but on that Grace which for him had shorn the inevitable judgment of its terrors."

Often must the wanderer amid forests lay his head upon a rude log, while above him is the abyss of stars. Thus the weary, heavy-laden, dying Christian leans upon the Bible, yet looks up the while to the beaming canopy of immortal life—to those things which are above.

Perhaps some of the love for the Bible which was possessed by our maternal grandfather, passed into her soul at his death, when she was only five years old; for this gentleman studied it in Hebrew and Greek. You will remember his rare editions of Bibles, glossaries, and dictionaries in those languages, and the immense trunkful of manuscript notes and commentaries upon the Bible which he left as a legacy to us from his intellectual treasury.

This grandfather — Abraham Oakey, for a quarter of a century Deputy Treasurer of this State — married his first wife (our maternal grandmother) out of a Huguenot family named D'Assignie. And certainly, the mental adherence, the moral persistence and bravery to uphold intellectual convictions which belong to Huguenot blood were wondrously exemplified in Marcia's life — her life, which, intellectually strong and morally great, was, from very childhood, physically weak.

Within her desk, at which I now write to you, lie piles of unpublished journals and manuscripts.

Doubtless scores of portfolios in the households of families who loved her contain her friendly correspondence. And on yonder table are collected and uniformly bound, for her mother, her published writings, which I will catalogue for you in an addendum sheet. Almost every thought of hers, unuttered, spoken, or written, traversed a physically lesioned brain. Many of her paragraphs were positively traced amid great bodily suffering and organic pain.

Do you not recall that your first knowledge of her was as a child of thirteen, reclining with spinal weakness on the little couch in our modest McDougal-street *ménage*? Can you not vividly picture her at the time when you as teacher and I as reporter were aiding the expenses of education with the petty struggles of pleasant labor, and through her pain she smiled upon our gossip and plans?

Marcia never sympathized with, although she never rebuked, my belief in the revelations to Emanuel Swedenborg; but I often told her that

if angels did minister, there must remain ever
with her One of Patience—perhaps Him apos-
trophized by Whittier :

“ Angel of patience ! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling palm ;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear ;
The throbs of wounded pride to still,
And make our own our Father's will.
O thou who mournest on thy way,
With longings for the close of day,
He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers, ‘ Be resigned.’
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.”

She used to say that a Christian should have his faith wiped clean of the dust of all unbelief and doubts, like as an astronomer cleansed from every speck the delicate lenses of the instrument that brought the material heavens nearer to his sight. Her Christian faith was illimitable. She believed holy things without reserve, and in her ordinary life her belief in those who won her confidence was also an entire one.

Her life in God was that of a young child in its parents. The passer-by finds it in the street and asks, "Where do you live?" "I live with Father." "Are you not lost?" "No, Father said he would come back for me." "Does he tell the truth?" "He is my Father."

Does not skepticism come only to the growing child when it goes out into the doubting world? Yet even there the grounded faith in Home and Father remains a protection!

My sister's faith was a trained one. At first it may have been as ivy creeping around the church-porch, but as years rolled on, her faith, like this plant, which roots and clings as it creeps upward, had reached to the topmost towers—those towers which, as Alexander Smith somewhere beautifully remarks, “lift up their spires to Heaven, as if to plead for sinful hamlets at their feet.”

Faith was her Christian logic. “The Bible says so,” was her major premiss whenever science or ingenuity started adverse discussion; and, as you have perceived from her labors as teacher and author, her Faith was the Parent of Works.

She knew that Faith must be married to action, and that it ought to produce. This graceful marriage of virtues brought to her resignation. Through her faith, she recognized, with Jeremy Taylor, that the sorrow of her life—her ill-health and consequent inability to do all she wished—was a seminary of comfort, a nursery of virtue, an exercise of wisdom, a venturing for a crown, and the guide-post to the gate of glory.

With the eye of her faith, although ever sensible of her thousand failings and imperfections, she still looked on her Redeemer ; and daily her soul, like the flight of an eagle toward the heavens, soared nigh the region of everlasting happiness.

V.

The Parish Visitor—the gazette she had often illustrated by her facile pen—contained, in its issue of July, 1873, the following editorial that was understood to be written by the Rev. Heman Dyer, D.D., whom, as the ever-welcomed guest of our family, you have so often met :

“ THE DEATH OF MISS HALL.

“ On the third day of June last, Miss M. A. Hall, of this city, was released from her sufferings and entered upon her rest. It is with no ordinary emotions we make this announcement. Not only has a dear friend been taken away, but one who has stood in peculiar relations to us during all our residence in this city. To us her death is a great personal sorrow, and a great loss to the work in which we have been so long engaged. For twenty years she has been constantly and intimately associated with us in all our labors. From the first she identified herself fully with

the principles and interests of the Society, and threw herself into its work with all the ability and energy with which God had so eminently endowed her. On coming, therefore, to New-York, to engage in what was to us a new and untried work, we found in her the very associate and assistant we most needed. Her superior natural gifts, her cultivation, and her deep knowledge and experience in divine things, as well as her great facility in the use of her pen, eminently fitted her to participate in the manifold duties which devolved upon us.

“The Society was in its infancy, and nearly every thing was to be done. Books and manuscripts were to be carefully read. Two periodicals were to be carried on. Pictures were to be designed and engraved for illustrating one of the periodicals, and many of the smaller books and tracts ; and an immense amount of proof-reading had to be performed. To these labors she gave herself without reserve. She at once took the entire charge of *The Standard-Bearer*, writing most of the pieces herself. Through the twenty

years of her connection with it, first as *The Standard Bearer*, and of late years as *The Missionary Echo and Standard-Bearer*, she has been the sole editor. The success which has attended her labors may be seen in the fact that when she first took charge of it the monthly issues amounted to a few hundred copies, and now, at the close of her service, they amount to thirty thousand copies. In preparing and making up *The Parish Visitor*, Miss Hall rendered most efficient aid. She contributed much original matter to its pages; and in her extensive reading made many of its best selections.

“During this period, she wrote the following works, which were published by the Society: *Christmas at Fern Lodge; Christmas Scenes in New-York; Christmas at Sea; The New Picture-Book; Pictures and Stories; Pictures for the Little Ones, with Stories; Prayer and Precept; Andy's Lesson, and How he Learned It; Addie and her Turtle; Lizzie's Visit to New-York; Cosmo's Visit to his Grandfather, and Pictures for the Nursery.*

“These works were written particularly for the benefit of children and youth, in whom she took the deepest interest. It seemed as though she never could do enough for them. For all this labor of love, she received many testimonies while living, and no doubt she will receive many more in the world to which she has gone.

“In our frequent and often necessarily protracted absences, we left nearly all our work in her hands, which was attended to with wonderful promptness and accuracy. In a word, without just such assistance as she rendered, we should have utterly failed and broken down. And all this was a gratuitous service—a free-will offering to her Lord and Saviour.

“We mention these things not to praise the departed—she is beyond the reach of human praise, and needs it not—but that the friends of the Society may know how much its success, under God, has been due to her labors, and how great is the loss which has been sustained by her death.

“In the long-continued and unremitting services which Miss Hall rendered, in connection with the Evangelical Knowledge Society, she did not forget or neglect any of the claims which her family, her friends, or society at large had upon her. Her high cultivation, and her bright, engaging spirit and manners, made her a great favorite among all who knew her. She was alike the companion of the old and the young. She could throw herself with all the enthusiasm of her nature into the feelings, thoughts, plans, and amusements of children, and at the same time be the chosen friend and companion of those of mature years. As a teacher in the Sunday-school, and particularly of infant-classes, she had few equals. Her long and most successful services at St. George’s Church most abundantly testify to her rare gifts in this respect. In parochial and other more general work, she took an active and often a leading part. In the origin and early development of *The Ladies’ Christian Union*, her influence was very great, and much of the success of that important institution is due to her energy and practical wisdom. Her faith and

courage were at times truly heroic. In a word, in every thing which promised good to others, Miss Hall was ready to do what she could.

“ The inspiring and constraining motive of all her labors was the love of Christ. In early life, she gave herself to the Saviour, and from that time she labored for His glory. Having been carefully and thoroughly trained in the principles and spirit of the Gospel, she rendered a whole-hearted service to her Lord. Her views of truth were exceedingly clear and well-defined, so that her religion was not only real, but most intelligent and practical. She was always ready to give a reason for the hope that was in her, and illustrated that hope in her daily life. These traits gave to her character great steadiness, and to her life a beautiful consistency. Few Christians make higher attainments or a greater progress in the divine life than Miss Hall did. And few lives afford a brighter example of what a Christian should be than did hers.

“ For eight years past, she has been an invalid, and much of the time a great sufferer. But

though shut up in a sick-room, she continued her labors up to the very last. While too feeble to sit up, or even to hold a pen, she retained the charge of the children's paper, and gave her last thoughts to the little ones whom she loved so tenderly, and for whom she had labored so long and so faithfully. She laid down her work and her life together. Her last days were days of great suffering, but her dear Lord bore her up in His own arms, and gave her His own peace. May we have grace to receive the lessons of this great bereavement, and be enabled to follow the sainted one as she followed Christ!"

VI.

Another number of *The Parish Visitor* contained the following contribution :

“MISS HALL.

“ The following testimony from a friend shows the estimation in which Miss Hall was held by those who knew her best :

“ ‘ Our friend has gone. We realize now what her friendship was. As we recall our intercourse with one so dear to Christ, we feel that we have enjoyed a peculiar privilege. Her friendship was of no ordinary character. It was a reflection of the friendship of Christ. The tenderness, the forbearance, the beautiful unselfishness of the Master marked her relations with her friends. She lived so much with Him that unconsciously she became like Him. Christ lived in her and showed Himself through her life. Like the Master, she loved every one, and yet found a peculiar

refreshment of spirit in the friendship of a chosen few. As one of this inner circle, it is a privilege to gather up some of the lessons of her life, and to record a few of the impressions produced by her consistent Christian character. These memories of a friend will perhaps be useful to other friends and to those who, like her, are called to learn Christ in the school of suffering.

“‘In the last pages of *Stepping Heavenward*—that wonderful soul history—Mrs. Prentiss brings out the deepening experience of one who had long been a learner in this school. Katie, nearing the end of her journey, sums up the lessons of the way in these words: “What time and strength I have left let me spend in praying for all men; for all sufferers, for all who are out of the way, for all whom I love. And their name is Legion, for I love every body. Yes, I love every body! That crowning joy has come to me at last!”

“‘On one occasion, when referring to these favorite pages of a favorite book, Miss Hall

wrote : “ It seems to me that no one who has not endured a long illness can fully enter into their meaning. With her, I am trying and I hope learning to say, ‘ This crowning joy has come to me at last. I love every body ! ’ ”

“ ‘ This love was the crowning grace of her life. It was this that gave to her simplest words an indescribable charm. It drew all hearts to her, and made itself felt in all that she said and did.

“ ‘ She was a sufferer, and yet the well and strong came to her for help. Self-forgetful to the last degree, she gave rather than expected sympathy. How many leaned on the strong heart of this suffering woman ! How many depended on its stores for refreshment and support ! To the very last, she thought for others. When unable to serve them in other ways, her loving heart would ascend in prayer and seek blessings for their souls. Once, when speaking of a time of increased feebleness, when all active work was denied, she wrote : “ I was feeling this especially the other day when the thought came into my



mind, 'Perhaps the dear Lord only wants you to serve Him by praying for others.' It was a very comforting thought that I could serve Him by just closing my eyes and letting my thoughts go up in petitions for my loved ones."

"This work was her constant delight. She would leave herself and her wants to go in spirit among the active workers in the vineyard, among the sick and suffering, or the little children to whom she was especially drawn, sharing in their joys and making their sorrows her own. In one of her letters, she alludes to this way of working for Jesus :

"What a beautiful day we had Sunday ! I was not able to go to church, but I enjoyed the sunshine at home. I thought of the army of busy workers for Jesus in this city ; first of the hundreds of Sunday-school teachers ; then of the clergymen holding forth the word of life ; then of the mission-workers—laymen visiting the hospitals—women visiting the poor and afflicted—while I could only sit and pray and praise ; but

I was thankful there were so many to work for the blessed Master.”

“‘Hers was no idle life. “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” are words that best describe it. So intense was her sense of the responsibilities of life, that to the very last she struggled against the desire for the rest of heaven, that she might devote all her energies to the work that was given her to do.

“‘ We can not better describe this devotion to her Master’s work than in her own words :

“‘“ As we read the sublime verses in the latter part of the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, commencing, ‘Behold, I show you a mystery : We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,’ etc., on to the words, ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,’ and then think of our daily struggles with temptation and trials, caused by our own sins and the evil that is in the world, we are ready to exclaim, Oh ! that we could leave it

all, and go now to the enjoyment of this victory in the presence of Christ and His redeemed in glory! But as we read the verse which follows, we see that it was not to awaken longings such as these that the promise of victory in the last conflict was given, but rather to animate us to zeal and earnestness in the work which Christ has given us to do here on the earth.

“““ *Therefore,*’ because you have these precious promises, ‘my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.’”

“‘From such a Christian, one whose life was so wholly given to Christ, one whose progress in divine things was so remarkable, and whose very name is associated with rare spiritual attainments and great usefulness, how precious is this, her dying testimony! The Master’s call had been given. She was almost home. A life marked by labor and patience for Jesus lay behind her, a life of eternal joy was in sight. It

was at this time she wrote her last words to a friend. And what words they are! "I am feeling so at rest, for I have laid all my sins on Jesus, and He has forgiven them, so I do not have to think of them. All that He has ever enabled me to do in His service has been so unprofitably done that I have no satisfaction in thinking of that, so I just rejoice in His love and mercy.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling ;"

or rather rest in the cleft of the Rock. Suppose we had to think of something wherewith to purchase our acceptance, how anxious I should be! But now it is, 'Just as I am, Thou wilt receive.'

"What a testimony! Christ all in all! With such a spirit, well might she exclaim with her expiring breath, "*I see Jesus.*"'"

VII.

The Missionary Echo and Standard-Bearer, a Sunday-school paper for children, which she had edited for many years, sustained a severe loss in her death. The following notices appeared in the July and August numbers :

“THE DEATH OF MISS HALL.

“It is with deep sorrow of heart that we announce the death of Miss M. A. Hall, who for so many years has had the entire charge of this paper. She departed to her rest on Tuesday, the 3d day of June, 1873.

“During twenty years, she was the editor of *The Standard-Bearer and Missionary Echo*. For eight years, she has been an invalid, and much of the time a great sufferer. But through all this period, she has retained the care of the paper, and as her feeble and declining strength would permit, has ministered to the pleasure and profit of the children. Her love

for them never grew cold or weary, and to the very last her heart and thoughts were occupied in their behalf. But her work is done ; she has said her last words to the children whom she loved so dearly. Her wasted, suffering body is at rest ; and she has gone to live with the dear Saviour, in the beautiful home which He has prepared for her. Our heart is full, and we could say much ; but the following tribute from one who stood in the tenderest relations to Miss Hall, and knew her most intimately, expresses, better than we know how to do, our own thoughts and feelings, and therefore we most gladly adopt it as our own :

“ ‘ One who loved you very dearly, children, has gone home to heaven. When she was a little child, like you, she gave herself to Jesus ; and after a useful, lovely life of consecration to His service, she is at rest. The Master has called for His faithful servant to come up higher.

“ ‘ The initials M. A. H. are very familiar to you all, and although the last two or three numbers have not contained stories from her, yet she

has continued to direct the paper to the last. Though laid upon a couch of great suffering and very feeble, still she prepared this very number for the press. Many of her stories were written while she was in much pain, yet her pen was never idle, for she loved little children so much, she could not do enough for them. She never wrote any thing that did not teach some lesson she had learned from her Saviour's lips. The gift of writing which He gave her was employed solely in His cause, and she has left many books, besides her writings in this paper, to testify to her faithfulness in His service. We shall miss her from her place; but our loss is her gain, and we would not call her back if we could. Let us all, dear children, learn from the beautiful example she has left us, to follow Jesus Christ, the perfect Man, through this life, serving Him until the day when He shall call us home. Then may we be found ready and willing to go, even as this dear one was. God lent her to us for a little while to teach us, and now that He has taken her, may her life and lessons bring forth their good fruit. God grant it !'

A TALK WITH THE CHILDREN ABOUT MISS HALL.

“The children who have enjoyed the beautiful stories and pictures in the *Echo* will, I know, be glad to hear something more of the dear friend who for so many years wrote and worked to give them this pleasure. When the paper came from year to year, full of all that the children most liked, I wonder if they ever thought of the loving hand and heart that sent it out. I wonder if they knew that this bright little paper came from a sick-room — that it was prepared by a lady who for more than eight years was seldom free from suffering.

“Sick-rooms are often sad, gloomy places, but this is only when Jesus is not in them. Hers was always bright and cheerful, just like her paper. It did not look like a sick-room; for though she was generally on her sofa, her bright, happy smile almost made you forget that she was suffering; and then every thing around her was pretty and attractive. When the sun shone

anywhere, it shone through her windows; in winter casting a rosy light from the crimson curtains over the walls and ceiling, resting on the pretty carpet and furniture, and brightening every thing and every body by its presence. No wonder this was a favorite room, and that the children loved it.

“There was always a welcome ready for her little pets — always a pleasant story to tell, or a new picture to show, or some plan for their amusement to talk over. But, best of all, she loved to tell them the story that was so dear to her —

“ the old, old story,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.”

Her life was a life of suffering, but the love of Jesus had made it bright and full of peace. She knew how precious He was, and this made her want to make every one happy in knowing Him. When God kept her in her room, where but few could come, she spent her time and strength in

writing books to help the children heavenward. Now her work is done! The patient, suffering life is ended, the life of joy begun. She is with Jesus in that beautiful land where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick!" There, among thousands of happy children, she is to-day, perhaps leading their praises to Him who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood. Do not forget her, children; but thank the dear Saviour for giving you such a friend, and then ask Him to let you follow her in living to make others happy.

"There will be no new stories by "M. A. H.;" but as you read over those she has written, and remember all you have heard of her, perhaps you will find them like new stories, and learn more from them than ever before. May each one of the little readers of the *Echo* follow her as she followed Christ, and so meet her at last in the Happy Land, to sing His praises forever.

"FANNY PERRY."

VIII.

If these articles had appeared in any leading daily, even under the obituary heading, perhaps they would have revived memories to only a few score out of each thousand readers. As in the wars that become historically conspicuous, those only who are generals and commanders become world-renowned, while the modest bravery, the heroic martyrdom, the silent prowess, and the unobtrusive patriotism of subalterns are, whenever observed, simply gazetted, to be cherished by a few friends, so is it in the great battle of human life. But the true Christian, like many a brave soldier, desires the consciousness of duty performed and good example given rather than commemoration. In each battle, victory is won by united deeds. The private worth and silent yet effective labors of unobtrusive Christians everywhere become incentives toward "fighting the good fight."

Every reader of *The Parish Visitor*, however, felt that the devoted friend who wrote about

Marcia's decease had placed within the circumscribed limits of an editorial only the outlines of a Christian career which, if it could be fully portrayed, for universal exhibition, would, so far as any thing can be called deserving which is allied to humanity, deserve commemoration beside the careers of Hannah More and Mrs. Bethune.

The dear one gone would have blushed to believe that such things were to be written about her, and yet she fully tried to live up to and implicitly believed in the text, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

IX.

I could narrate much interesting family history, and perhaps with customary propriety, in mentioning the birth and lineage of Marcia Anna Hall. But it never mattered so much to her that she was descended, in a right line, on the mother's side, from a regicide (Colonel John Oakey) of Charles the First and a Huguenot Countess, who sought refuge in America, as that her mother was one of the very first Sunday-school teachers in the United States, and in her native place, Albany, as Munsell, in his annals of the Knickerbocker city, at page 83, of vol. 7, commemorates. Nevertheless, as I have before indicated, it is evident that much of the tenacious convictions of duty and alacrity in sacrifice which flecked her life came from such ancestry.

I may add, for the acquaintances to whom you may show this letter, that Marcia was the second child and only daughter of Morgan James Hall—he of Welsh mother and English father—and

Elsie Lansing Oakey, the sixth child of the Abraham Oakey before mentioned and Alicia d'Assignie. This marriage took place in Albany, in 1825, where Mr. Oakey then lived in the service of the State government as Deputy Treasurer. But Marcia's birth occurred in New-Orleans, in 1829, where her father had become a merchant. Mr. Oakey was from Queen's (now Rutgers) College, and up to the day of his decease remained that careful student and manuscript annotator of the Scriptures which I have previously mentioned.

Marcia never knew her father, who died of yellow-fever in 1830. Brought almost immediately under maternal influences and strong religious surroundings, she illustrated from prattling infancy the text, "Suffer little children to come unto me." At an age which would sound absurdly except viewed now by her past life (as previously mentioned), she pored over the Bible and recited hymns. There was no childish sentiment about it; because year by year there was shown intelligent development of religious life. Indeed,

so intelligent and pronounced were her Christian graces that her pastor allowed her, in her eleventh year, to make public profession of her belief. She was educated in the Presbyterian Church, under the pastorate of Rev. Erskine Mason, D.D.; but when seventeen years of age, after much deliberation, transferred her allegiance of Christian government to the Episcopal faith and worship.

Her education was, to the greatest extent, self-influenced. She always seemed to be her own teacher. But for several years she enjoyed mental supervision from the late Mrs. H. B. Cooke, in whose seminary at Bloomfield, New-Jersey, she was from 1838 to 1841 a beloved pupil. She was particularly intimate with the daughters of the late Thomas Hastings, the zealous Christian gentleman who, during half a century of Christian happiness and example in the great metropolis, trained community upon community to the study of those divine harmonies which form the atmosphere of the better world. They were both women of sweet dispositions and beloved lives, and their companionship doubtless exercised (they

were the elders) benign influences upon their “little pet, Marcia.” One of their teachers (we should rather say their Christian sister and companion) lives in Mount Morris—the faithful Chloe—to mourn, amid much patiently-endured bodily suffering, the loss of her pupil Marcia. But it would be deep affectation to withhold expression of opinion that by the hourly devotion, patient watchfulness, intelligent discipline, and mental supervision of her Mother were Marcia’s early years best intellectually conserved.

X.

This Mother (now in her seventy-fourth year) writes in her own clear manuscript as follows: "As I sit and think of my dear departed child, day by day, the little incidents of her infancy and childhood come up so vividly before me as to induce me to write some of them down, to show, as I always believed, God had sanctified her from her earliest consciousness. Before she could speak plainly, she prayed—came kneeling by my side, calling God her Father—she had lost her earthly one. From that time, she worshiped Jesus as 'the *image of His Father*,' and her present real Friend. When only four years of age, during Dr. Mason's prayer in church, she whispered to me, 'Mother, he said my text, "God so loved the world," etc. Does he know God loves *me*?' When asked by some one, 'How do you, such a little girl, know that you love God?' she replied, 'Why, I give myself to Him every day, and He says, "*Come*, I will love you always.'"

“She learned to read at four years of age, and would commit hymns by singing them; she would lead the worship in a prayer-meeting of her Sunday-school class without hesitancy, and pray in our family when asked. She often expressed a desire to profess her faith in Christ in church, but was kept back until she was eleven years old. Then her health was perfect, her spirits buoyant, and always cheerful. One year after this she had a fall from the school-steps and bruised her back, seriously affecting the spinal marrow. She was taken from school and placed under medical care, but lay on her couch for six months. Though her sufferings were very great, her Saviour’s arm was never weary, and His support kept away every doubt or murmur. She pursued her studies with a strong perseverance while reclining on her couch, nor was she one moment idle, saying, ‘I forget the pain when I am employed.’ She made fancy work for a child missionary society, and would knit when she could not sew. She was so happy that some who visited her, as well as her physician, called her ‘a sweet bird.’

“ Her fondness for young children was great ; she always had a favorite whom she daily wished to see, or to send some token of love, even in denying herself. After eight months' confinement, she was pronounced well, and commenced to attend a private class, but, being weak, she fell again, and was laid down with more agony than before. This was a sad trial. When her mother would regret it and pity her, she would speak words of comfort, saying it would work for good. God was love—it was all love. She was then preparing for a life of usefulness in her Master's service. At one time, her physician called in Dr. Mott, who gave slight hopes of her recovery. When told this opinion, she replied, ‘ I know I shall be well ; for Jesus told me so, and He will let me work for Him.’ By advice, she was taken to the seaside for bathing, and by spending three successive summers thus, was measuredly restored. She began her ministry by daily reading the Bible to a sick cousin and instructing him, as well as preaching by her example to all connected with her. She was so unselfish that she did not ask the care she needed or should have had.

“The Lord had work for her in His church, and, in mercy, established her health. Her delight was in teaching young children. Being asked by Dr. Hastings what employment she would like in heaven, she answered, ‘I would love to lead a choir of children.’ She was permitted to lead and teach them for over twelve years on earth, and now her song is begun in heaven.”

XI.

Her secular as well as religious education was mainly, however, of her own direction. She early began to map out extensions and collateral illustrations of her ordinary studies. She was, when quite young, a sound and independent thinker. At twelve years of age, her compositions and letters began to be notable for their ideas rather than the mere word-painting which marks juvenile writings.

Marcia's whole life, you know, was a struggle of Mind for victory over Body. Had she possessed the physical strength that appertains to her families, to the extent with which she owned their nervous vitality and tenacity of life, it would doubtless be impossible to now estimate the great work she might have accomplished in Christian life. When quite young, an accident resulted in developing spinal weakness. For three years she was condemned to that couch and incessant confinements, beside which we

were so often together. After her thirteenth year, she can not be said to have known a day of perfect health. Yet the annoyances and disappointments which bodily weakness occasioned were seldom betrayed to friends and acquaintances, and never, to her latest breath, was there more than a spasmodic querulousness, the tribute of humanity to mortal pain. There were no murmurs—those murmurs which are the results of deliberate volition. Hers was ever a Christian patience—an emanation of Bible faith and triumphing Hope—a patience illustrated with pleasant looks, considerate tones, and cheerful mien.

When just of age, her real life-work began, under the lead of that truly modern apostle, the Rector of St. George's, Stephen H. Tyng, who will have his degree conferred upon him in the better world. She began in his parish her life devotion to children. From 1850 to 1864, she was the sole teacher of the infant class in his Sunday-school, numbering about three hundred children. Nothing could be added to that sum-

ming-up of her career in the Heavenly service which appeared in the address of her rector at the funeral services. There always seemed to have been bestowed upon her additional bodily strength while engaged in her Sunday-school work. Fatigue of no ordinary type preceded and followed this attendance. Yet during the hours of ministration on Sunday, or even of executive supervision, correspondence, and visitations, a calmness and a smile rested upon her countenance, behind which no trace of human suffering then appeared.

About the same period, she entered into the service of the Protestant Evangelical Knowledge Society as a writer for children. To them, for a quarter of a century, she gave her voice on the Lord's Day, and her pen on every other one. For this work of instructing children, she was admirably adapted. The instructor must be an interester. She was both. As is common to many children—who, for the most part, lose or forsake the faculty in growing life—she became a weaver of juvenile fancies about the family circle. It

was a faculty she cultivated. It was one spontaneously flowing, rather than intentionally directed, into a religious channel, and from earliest youth her narratives appeared interesting and attractive. She seemed to possess an intuitive idea of what the diverse classes of childhood liked to hear about, and of the various styles of narrative that magnetized the juvenile attention. Thus she was enabled to individualize and adapt.

XII.

Her industrious devotion with the pen appears in twenty volumes of *The Standard-Bearer*, and the following volumes :

Susy Lee. Published 1851. American Sunday-School Union.

Sunday-School Hymn-Book. Compiled and published 1855. E. K. Society.

Infant-School Hymn-Book. Compiled and published 1855. E. K. Society.

Picture-Book. Written and published 1855. E. K. Society.

Pictures and Stories. Written and published 1855. A. D. F. Randolph.

The Child's Sunday Book. Written and published 1855. A. D. F. Randolph.

Picture-Book, No. II. Written and published 1856. E. K. Society.

Goodly Cedars. Written and published 1858. Randolph.

The Gleaners. Written and published 1859. Randolph.

Cosmo's Visit. Written and published 1859. R. Carter & Brothers.

Kitty's Victory. Written and published 1860. R. Carter & Brothers.

Christmas at Fern Lodge. Written and published 1860.
E. K. Society.

Christmas in New-York. Written and published 1862. E.
K. Society.

Annie Price. Written and published 1861. R. Carter &
Brothers.

James Hubert's Rooster. Written and published 1861. R.
Carter & Brothers.

Christmas at Sea. Written and published 1863. E. K. So-
ciety.

Addie and her Turtle. Written and published 1863. E.
K. Society.

Lizzie's Visit. Written and published 1863. E. K. Society.

Andy's Lesson. Written and published 1863. E. K. So-
ciety.

What Elsie Loved Best. Written and published 1865. R.
Carter & Brothers.

Happy Charlie. Written and published 1865. R. Carter
& Brothers.

Pictures and Stories. Written and published 1865. E. K.
Society.

Maggie and the Sparrows. Written and published 1868.
R. Carter & Brothers.

Dolly's Christmas Chickens. Written and published 1868.
R. Carter & Brothers.

Faithful Rover. Written and published 1871. R. Carter
& Brothers.

Harry and his Pony. Written and published 1871. R. Carter & Brothers.
Pictures for the Nursery. (Hanging scrolls.) 1872. E. K. Society.
Prayer and Precept. (Hanging scrolls.) 1872. E. K. Society.
Fun and Work. Written 1872, and published 1873. R. Carter & Brothers.

She also wrote a temperance story, called *Walter and his Sleigh*, which appeared in a volume published by the American Temperance Society, entitled *Old Brown Pitcher*. This list, of course, can not enumerate editorials and articles which appeared from time to time in other papers and magazines, some of which bore her signature, while others were anonymous.

These labors may be said to have been purely gratuitous. There were payments made from time to time, but so inconsiderable in amounts that they merely covered, as was just, ordinary disbursements incurred by an editor or writer in the purchase of books and in traversing channels of information. Her mother's means were ample for all necessities, and it was Marcia's

pleasure to feel that she was not a niggard in the service of the Lord, to whom (quoting an eminent divine) “the widow’s mite and the child’s box of shillings came as acceptably as endowment from the grateful merchant.”

XIII.

I beg to send you a copy of the following vivid letter, written to Marcia's mother by Mrs. Mary Meiersmith, the wife of the Rev. Matson Meiersmith, D.D., rector of St. John's church, Hartford, Ct.

“You ask me, dear Mrs. Hall, for some reminiscences of the earlier days of our blessed friendship—Marcia's and mine.

“As I look back over the thirty years that we have been nearer friends than sisters often are, the memories of our closely linked lives seem to gather themselves into a soft and lustrous veil. Every thing is gently shadowed and at the same time brightened by its enfolding. Here and there a scene, a conversation, an incident, sparkles like a thread of gold or silver; but to unravel it from the finished fabric is almost like tearing asunder that which is perfect and priceless to me. Besides, bright and unshaded as

were the beginnings of our friendship, it has so strengthened and broadened with the passing years, that I know not how to linger over the early days, when later ones have been so much richer and fuller. So you will forgive me, if, instead of choosing from dates and incidents, I try only to give you some faint idea what Marcia has been to me. Perhaps I may not say that our love began in baby-days, but I know we were mutually attracted in infant-school, as we commenced the mysteries of spelling and writing together, and these early recollections prepared us to be friends, when, after a seven years' separation, we met again in dear Miss P.'s school-room.

“I remember my first day there. For several years, my sister and I had been studying at home, and we found ourselves sitting, shy and wondering, among a group of twenty laughing girls, all at home with each other, and all on terms of loving intimacy with their teacher. Dear Marcia was then the acknowledged head of the class. With the rare grace and kindness of manner

which always characterized her, when courtesy was needed, she came to us lonely ones, in the first recess, and introducing herself, recalled our childish acquaintance, and at once we were at ease, and in love with her. From that hour, nothing ever clouded our friendship; nor do I recall word or act of hers which mars the perfect rounding of the character I then began to love and reverence. Her influence in that little circle was unbounded. Her mind was unusually matured, and her education more advanced than that of others of her age, while her tact and grace, and her loving Christian heart, combined to give her the foremost position she deserved. Her delicate health and fragile appearance won for her in advance a consideration which she could not fail to retain. Memory recalls with almost equal distinctness her leadership in every thing intellectual and religious, and in the gay sports and practical jokes of the recreation hours. It was to her fertile brain and ever-ready humor that we owed the little charades, pantomimes, and adaptations of romances, which took the place with us of the usual meaningless sports.

A little play which she wrote at the age of fourteen, when a guest at our house, and which was acted by a group of children, to the infinite amusement of their seniors, gave promise of talent enough in that line, had she chosen so to cultivate her ready pen. But her life was even then consecrated, and her heart was overflowing with love to her chosen Master, and to the young friends who so looked up to her. Precious hours of prayer and communing are remembered by some now bearing life's burdens the more faithfully for such early help. Others to whom she loved to minister were soon gathered into the upper fold. Mingled with recollections of happy school-days, come thoughts of shadowed hours, when our dear one was kept a close prisoner by weakness and pain, and when it was my privilege to try to bring her a little of the outside world in my daily visits. The same bright smile always greeted me, and the same unselfish inquiries after the interests of others, which marked her later years of languor and suffering.

“When health was in a good degree restored,



we all know how unbounded was her mental vigor and activity, and how her physical powers were always taxed to the utmost to carry out her plans of beneficence and her labors of love. The first ten years of my married life were brightened with many happy visits from her, and long and precious letters full of cheer and counsel. When Marcia was with me, I knew that all would move smoothly in domestic affairs. She was practical and capable, and supplemented my inexperience with her better judgment and quicker thought. Many an amusing scene presents itself to my mind, when what had nearly been a household catastrophe resulted in a happy achievement through her quick wit and ready hand. Indeed, I can not think of a sphere which she seemed incapable of filling, and I felt lost when I could not appeal to her. Her ready, loving sympathy, tact in criticism, frankness in reproof, and true appreciation of all the circumstances in which her help was sought, made her, I must think, one of a thousand, as friend and counselor.

“I never brought joy or sorrow to her, or appealed to her in perplexity, without receiving the sympathy and word of help needed. Many of her friends will recall her happy use of Scripture precepts and promises; selecting always the message most apt and most inspiring. During the years when, scarcely more than a girl herself, she was first using her pen for the children, she often spoke to me of her deep sense of responsibility for the gift she was cultivating, and it was not without misgivings that her first little book was published. ‘I am not satisfied merely to amuse or instruct,’ she wrote to me, ‘I want to do good.’ Marcia identified herself so thoroughly with those she loved that she took into her heart all that was dear to them. Thus she adopted all my loved ones, and was to them as daughter and sister.

“‘How wonderful it is that Marcia can be so unworldly, and yet interest herself so earnestly in all our affairs!’ was a remark I often heard made. It was the rare combination of the life hidden with Christ, yet in perfect sympathy

with the cares, troubles, and foibles of all with whom she came in contact, which gave her the power she had with children and young people, both in writing and personal intercourse.

“Those who were incapable of entering into the depths of such a life could not be insensible to its influence.

“I have realized sadly for many years what I have lost of personal intercourse with my beloved friend, as her invalid life and mine of many cares have been necessarily so often separated. But whenever we met, we were one again, and enjoyed the restful satisfaction of our unbroken friendship.

“After each reunion, I was conscious of her ripening life, and knew that we could not keep her much longer from the home awaiting her. Now that she is gone, I know that one of the most precious treasures of my life has been taken from me. Her love, her counsel, her example, her prayers, they were all priceless.

“I believe our friendship was a very rare one. I am glad to bear my testimony to the reality of an affection commencing in childhood and increasing with advancing years, until the two lives knew no possibility of discord. You know how reticent Marcia was in putting her deepest emotions into words. As frank and unrestrained as was our intercourse, she rarely spoke to me of spiritual experiences. I could only gather from the ever-ready help she brought to all my needs, how rich was her own heart in treasures of heavenly grace. ‘I don’t like to speak of a person’s *religious* life,’ she once said to me, ‘as if one had two lives, a religious and a worldly one. I want to feel that all my life is bound to my Saviour’s.’ Every gift and grace she had was consecrated, and the Master lived in His loving disciple. In youthful days, she talked more to me of feelings and experiences. Later, she said, ‘It ought to be between the Lord and His people as it has been with us. We thought and talked much of our love for each other when we were girls, and often feared lest something should disturb our friendship. Now we *know* and rest

upon each other. So ought we to know and rest upon our Saviour. So we should think of Him as knowing and trusting us.'

"Each time I saw her, and every letter she was able to write to me during the last year of her life, showed me how the spiritual grew and strengthened, as the earthly perished. I think she almost lived in the presence of the Blessed. It was but the echo of my own thoughts when one said to me, 'The last time I saw Marcia, I felt as if I must make her the bearer of messages into the unseen world. Her eyes were radiant with its light. She seemed in communion then with the King, and with the saints in His Paradise.' There is so much I could say of her out of my full heart, but others have a sacred right, and can say it better than I. Let me remind you again why I can not bring incidents into this letter. If one's acquaintance with another has consisted of occasional interviews, or been limited to a brief time, scenes are easily reproduced; but Marcia's life has been so long parallel with mine, and we have been so con-

stantly in communion, that I can fix upon no facts or circumstances which made her any thing to me. It is just the consciousness of *herself*, as a perpetual loving presence, whether with me or absent from me, which has enriched my whole life, and which seems as near me, behind the veil, as it did months ago when each week brought me loving words from her pen. For the hour of reunion I look with a certain faith, and for the rest of my days shall thank God for her blessed life, and for the gift of her love through so many years of joy and sorrow.”

XIV.

Her entire trust and reliance in the Saviour, and the gracious, loving support which He gave her in the long ten weary years of suffering that she was called upon to endure, are best shown in the following extracts from her diary. For over twenty years, she kept a little pocket-diary of events, from which the following selections have been made. As she herself says, "A Christian's life is a hidden one," and there is but little record of it in her notes. Still, these few extracts show her friends, as her life did, the patient endurance and perfect repose in the Lord Jesus which characterized her Christian faith.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY.

" ' I said this is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.' In the month of November, 1863, it pleased my Heavenly Father to take from me

the health and strength with which for many preceding years He had blessed me, and in their stead to send me many months of weakness and pain. Yet He did not leave me comfortless, but sent the blessed Comforter to me, even the Spirit of Truth, to abide with me. This blessed Comforter brought many things to my remembrance, and suggested many times to my mind words of Scripture which sustained and rejoiced my heart. That I may never forget what was then taught me, I am going to record each text in this book, so that if I am ever tempted to despond or complain, I can read how the Lord then helped me, and trust Him still.

“*February*, 1864.—During this month, I was confined to my bed most of the time. The psalm which was oftenest in my mind was the 130th, beginning, ‘Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!’ more particularly the verse, ‘But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.’ It was very precious to remember that Jesus had washed away my sins; in my weakness, I had nothing to do but rest in

Him. It was also a comfort to remember these words of the Lord Jesus, 'As many as I love I rebuke and chasten,' and to look upon this illness as sent as a mark of love, to lead me to forsake sin and set my affections upon Himself.

“*March 10th, 1864.*—Dr. Marcy examined my lungs to-day, and seems to think me more seriously ill than I supposed, and in view of possible months of weakness and suffering, my spirit sank within me. Then the Spirit whispered to me these words, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Yet not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows,' and I was comforted.

“*August, 1864, Arlington, Vt.*—From my window, I see across the road the village church with the graveyard by its side; beyond rises a mountain, with green pastures and fields of grain on its sloping sides, and the summit crowned with forest trees—

'Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.'

“From the top of this mountain there is an extensive prospect; but the graveyard, which to me is so prominent an object, is not noticed at all. So when we reach those heavenly heights, the grave and death, through which we reached them, and which now lie between us and them, will seem as nothing, for our eyes will behold the glories of eternity.

“*New-York, September 3d, 1864.*—Was taken very ill at Arlington, and had no means of procuring medical aid. For a time, I was completely cast down, but casting my eyes toward the mountains, which I could see from my window as I lay in my bed, the Spirit brought these words to my remembrance: ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help—my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.’ Then I was enabled to trust myself to Him, to cast all my care upon Him, praying that if it was His will, I might be raised up from that bed, and reach my home once more. My spirit was immediately calmed.

I would 'rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.'

"*January 25th*, 1865.—Finished reading the life of Dr. Cutler. The one thought which the book suggests is this, that God prolongs the lives of His servants, even through years of suffering and weakness, until their work for Him is accomplished, and then takes them to glory. Who would wish to live longer, and who would wish to *rest*, while there is any thing on earth to do for the Redeemer's glory?

"*April 3d*, 1865.—Was feeling depressed that I do not get better, and desponding at the inefficiency of human aid, when I was directed in my reading to the incident of our Saviour's walking on the water and His rebuke to Peter's failing faith. Then I saw that in the darkest hour of affliction, Jesus says to us, 'It is I, be not afraid,' and that as we sink in despondency, He puts forth His hand and holds us up, saying, 'Wherefore didst thou doubt, O ye of little faith?' He has sent this sickness, He will carry me through

it, giving me health again if it be for His glory, and in His own time, which is the best time, rest in the mansions He has prepared.

“*September 8th*, 1865.—There has been a constant succession of damp, cloudy days, for a week, and I long once more for sunshine. There is a quiet happiness which comes to me with the sun; it is like the presence of a dear friend, and I feel depressed if it is absent, and welcome its return, as I would that of a loved one. But I must not forget that Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, will be ever present with me, and having Him, I would rejoice always. I would bask in His presence as I do in the sunlight.

“*November 8th*.—I particularly hoped to go to church to-day, more so as it was the day for communion, but it was too cold and blustering. This text was sent to comfort me: ‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in *the house of the Lord forever!*’ There will come a time when I shall enjoy the worship of the Lord.

“ *November 12th.*—A clear, bright day. Went to St. George’s in a carriage. Enjoyed the service more than I ever enjoyed it before. A year had passed since I had united in it. . . . I felt that I was again at *home*, and all the rest of the day have been repeating to myself, ‘A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.’ If it were not for troubling others, I would willingly endure illness for weeks, to have the privilege of this afternoon.

“ *December 31st.*—The record of the year shows many days of illness and inactivity, yet it has not been an unhappy one, and though there is not much to tell of outward work, there has been much heart-work ; much striving with an unsubdued will ; much struggles with an impatient spirit, and many longings after holiness. The blessed Saviour has been ever present with me, sustaining and comforting, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, has filled my mind. The New Year may be the happiest of my life, for it may usher me into the presence of my Saviour, to be like Him, because I shall see

Him as He is. Let me not forget that ‘every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’

“ *May 9th*, 1869.—When we feel that our motives are misunderstood, and that those with whom we are in daily intercourse have no idea of our conflicts, trials, or even joys, we must remember that the life we are living as Christians is a hidden one. ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God,’ therefore let us be content to be God’s hidden ones, while we strive to purify ourselves as He is pure.

“ *May 20th*, 1869.—The feeling of gratitude is not natural to the human heart. In fact, it is repugnant to human nature. People would rather feel they had gained benefits themselves, and they are apt to dislike those who confer them—so that self-sacrificing characters are not by any means those who are the most loved. Sometimes this is their own fault; they are so conscious that they have only the desire to benefit those about them, and they only know at what sacrifice they

have been able to do so, that they are disappointed at the slight return or appreciation their efforts receive. There is no satisfaction in doing good to others, but as we follow Christ's precept, 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return.'

"January 8th, 1870.—Have been much interested in reading St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians. It seems like a tender, loving letter to dear friends, the outgushings of an affectionate heart.

"November 28th, 1871.—For the past two weeks I have been preparing a series of daily prayers from the Collects, to be arranged like the *Silent Comforter*, a page for each day of the month and a prayer on each page, with one or two appropriate texts of Scripture. It is not designed for the sick or afflicted, but rather for the busy man or woman who pleads want of time as an excuse for neglecting prayer. These pages hanging in the room of such a one may, I hope, lead some careless soul to call upon God, and

some worldly Christian to a more intimate communion with Him. I have enjoyed selecting these texts very much. I have aimed to have them very practical and encouraging.

February, 1872.—I have been made so happy lately in thinking how our dear Lord compensates to His children when He lays them aside from active employment and the enjoyment of many things, by teaching them Himself, and manifesting Himself as He doth not to others, or perhaps I should say, as He has not to them in health. It is as if a tender mother withdraws her children from the large public school and teaches them herself, being their constant companion, or as if a father, after having allowed his children to labor for him awhile, takes them himself into some safe resting-place and talks to them of his tender love.”

About three months before Marcia was called Home, when strength was failing fast, and her sufferings were daily increased, she wrote to a dear friend : “I have so many mercies that my

heart sings with joy and gratitude all the time. I do not feel as if this illness is the arrow from the King to tell me He is now ready for me, but I have taken down the chart of that heavenly country, and examined it again, as good Dr. Cutler says, and I desire to be always waiting, with 'the door upon the latch.' ”

During her last winter, the frequent visits and ministrations of her devoted friend and pastor became of greater comfort. The very last entry made in her pocket diary was the date of April 22d, 1873—“Dr. Tyng called; prayed for just what I desired.” Then strength failed, and she was too feeble to record another event in that sainted, lovely life which left earth so soon afterward for the eternal joy and rest of Heaven.

XV.

In 1858 Marcia conceived the idea of a home for friendless young women, the aim and purpose of which is best given in her own words, obtained from her editorial on the subject, which was printed at the time in *The Parish Visitor* :

THE LADIES' CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

“This is an association of ladies formed for the purpose of aiding, in such ways as may be necessary, young women, and others of their own sex, who are compelled to earn a livelihood, and yet have not the protection of parents or the safeguards of Christian homes. In carrying out their plans, they have kept up, for two years, a boarding-house where special care has been taken to provide for the refining and elevating influence of a Christian family. In this particular they have been most successful. From their last report, we learn that fifty young women have been

accommodated during the year. A clergyman and his wife have charge of the house, and every attention is paid to the comforts and religious interests of those who reside there. To young women coming to the city to engage in any of the branches of pursuit open to females, such a provision is of inestimable value. No one knows how many such have been lost to society and to themselves for the want of just such a home. There is not a more interesting and valuable class among us than the young women who are engaged as teachers in our public schools, clerks in stores, seamstresses, engravers, and apprentices in our millinery and mantua establishments. And yet there is no class more unprotected or less cared for. Many of these have to struggle with poverty—with hardships of every kind—and it is not surprising that, under their manifold discouragements, they yield to temptations and throw themselves away. We are glad to find that the ladies of this association are devoting themselves particularly to this class. Their boarding-house has been quite successful, and many young women have enjoyed its benefits during

the year, and will bless God forever that such a home was provided for them. Instead of one, there should be twenty such boarding-houses in the city.

“ This is one of those quiet, noiseless influences which are so much needed in this great city. We are spending thousands of dollars for punishing and correcting crimes and vices already committed where we expend one dollar for their prevention. When shall we learn that prevention is always safer, better, wiser, and cheaper than cure? We are glad to learn that the matron and young women of the boarding-house have established a mission-school, mostly for boys, in one of the most abandoned districts of the city. We trust this association will receive the measure of support which its objects and plans require.”

After Marcia's death, the following letter was addressed by the Society to her mother, and I insert it here while referring to this subject :

“ 27 WASHINGTON SQUARE, }
N. Y. CITY, JUNE, 1873. }

“DEAR MRS. HALL: At the monthly meeting of the Ladies' Christian Union for June—the last general meeting of the season—you were the special subject of our prayers and of loving, tender words.

“ We feel that, as a society, we have sustained no common loss in the death of our beloved manager, Miss Marcia A. Hall, one who, with yourself and Mrs. Roberts, has been identified with our society from its earliest infancy; one who delighted to consecrate to this work her whole heart, her love, her thoughts, her pen, her time, her prayers; one who, when laid aside from active service with us, still gave us her wise and loving thoughts and counsels, and followed us step by step with her earnest prayers; one who helped to impress upon our work its noble, pure, Christian character; and we feel bereft as we think of our loss. To those who personally knew our dear sainted one, the loss is inexpressi-

bly great, and we feel that her place can never be filled. But we joy that, while she 'rests from her labors, her works do follow her.' All through this season, she has, week by week, been tenderly remembered in our prayers; and you also, dear friend, have been upborne in the arms of love, faith, and prayer. And now we want to have the love of our ladies gather around you very closely, for we *are one* with you in the sweetest and best of bonds.

"Dear friend, we know that no words can express the outgoings of our hearts toward you, but we feel you will accept the tribute of grateful affection we would record of one so dear to us, and one whose name is inwrought into the whole fabric of our work; and that you will accept the love and prayers of your own true 'sisters' in the love of Jesus.

"Most affectionately your friend, and Secretary
of Ladies' Christian Union,

"S. B. HILLS."

In the annual report the following tributary notice of their loss was given by the Secretary :

“Another, Miss Marcia A. Hall, in the prime of womanhood, the stay and solace of our aged mother in Israel, has triumphed over Death and the grave, and entered upon her reward. To her energy and personal consecration to Christ, this Society owes much of its early success. She was one of its founders and first workers, serving in turn as Secretary and Treasurer ; and during eight years of invalid life, aiding the work with her pen and her prayers. Our loss, though severe, is her gain. May her spirit of heroic faith and patient zeal pervade the hearts of those who are left to perform the work which she relinquished only with life.”

XVI.

Marcia's dissolution was preceded with the slow wasting of bronchial consumption. I do not propose to linger upon details of her immediately failing strength throughout the winter of 1873. I bury with the earthly tabernacle all details and thoughts of the bodily sufferings. I prefer alone to remember how as fibre wasted, the light in her beautiful eyes grew purer; how her failing voice subdued at times to low notes of music that seemed echoes from a far-off sphere; how her touch seemed more and more affectionate as the soul struggled to escape; how her angelic smile bade you forget the sallow cheek that now and then a hectic flush tinted, like as a maple leaf in autumn sere and yellow faintly glows under a sunset reflection; and how she taught to us all soul-lessons of Patience. Did she not know that the Heavenly Sculptor worked upon her? And she was patient, therefore!

The day before dissolution, she said, "There is only a veil between this world and the next. I

feel it." She was thinking of a passage in a sermon by the Rev. C. Stanford, of England. I copy it for you just as I feel she remembered it, while she spoke in feeble accents that, however, strongly reverberated through the chambers of her unwearied soul :

“There is only a veil between us and heaven ! A veil is the thinnest and frailest of all conceivable partitions. It is but a fine tissue, a delicate fibre of embroidery. It waves in the wind ; the touch of a child may stir it, an accident rend it ; the silent action of time will moulder it away. The veil that conceals heaven is only one embroidered existence, and, though fearfully and wonderfully made, it is only wrought out of our frail mortality. So slight is it that the puncture of a thorn, the touch of an insect’s wing, the breath of an infected atmosphere, may make it shake and fall. In a bound, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, in the throb of a pulse, in the flash of a thought, we may start into disembodied spirits, glide unabashed into the company of great and mighty angels, pass into the light

and amazement of eternity, know the great secret, gaze upon splendors which flesh and blood could not sustain, and which no words lawful for man to utter could describe! Brethren in Christ, there is but a step between you and death; between you and heaven there is but a veil."

XVII.

The veil fell in a second of time for her. "My breath is going," she whispered in my ear; "now it is here," and pointed to her throat. There was a faint sigh, and then instantaneously her fingers gently relaxed on her breast, like as dropping rose-petals touch the greensward upon a calm summer's day.

"So softly death succeeded life in her,
She did but dream of Heaven and she was there.
No pains she suffered, nor expired with noise ;
Her soul was whispered out with God's still voice."

DRYDEN.

Funeral services were conducted at our mother's house, by Dr. Tyng, the senior, and at the vault by Dr. Dyer. Modest and unobtrusive as her social life had been, and slight in fruitfulness as she deemed that her Christian career had proved, nevertheless the attendance evidenced how sincerely her friends estimated her character and the labors of her mortal life.

Dr. Tyng was asked to give a few notes of his address at the funeral. His answer reads as follows :

“I never made any preparation, even in thought, for an address. I spoke as I thought and felt. The delicate, attractive traits of her character as I saw them could hardly be described in an assembly. I try in vain to recall any thing that was said on that occasion. I am pleased to hear that a memorial is preparing of such a life and character. No one could have a more beautiful or brighter pattern before them. All that intelligence, amiability, and grace could give to a young lady seemed to have been bestowed upon her. She was a very enlightened and sanctified child of God. Her views of divine truth, perfectly clear and remarkably free from any false bias, we rarely meet with on earth, so intelligently and spiritually prepared to be useful and happy in the Saviour’s work and service. I have never enjoyed more truly a ministry to any one. Few have I ever seen at all approaching the measure of her grace. She also pre-

served in all the active labors of social life, in all her domestic character, in all her work for the welfare of others, as beautiful a pattern of truly elevated and transparent character as we probably shall ever see. Her memory is very precious to me, but I shall have no time or ability to prepare any such memorial of her as would in any degree be worthy of its design. Her record is on high with that gracious Saviour whom she so truly loved and honored."

Five nieces and a nephew—all between the ages of twenty-two and ten—live to hold in the most grateful remembrance the companionship of their aunt. She was the early instructor of each one. You know how graciously and with what unvarying sweetness of temper and uniformity of kindness she managed their education up to the childish era of their outer school-days, and then assisted their other teachers afterward. She was a pleasant encyclopedia for childish inquiries. "She had a way" (says one of the children) "of smiling information right into your memory." She was not only a great

reader, but a "tester" of the quality whereof she read. She was critical, and generously so. She was a concise talker of Saxon words. She discussed by illustration. And it is no wonder that the smiling photograph of her earthly semblance that beams from the dining-room walls receives the fondest smiles and delighted looks in return.

XVIII.

Shall I ever forget the picture—entirely a family one—presented when those nieces and that nephew grouped about their grandmother at the door of Marcia's tomb? It was on a summer's morning in Trinity Cemetery. That city of dead mortality seemed to be a dividing-line between the busy hum of the metropolis upon one side of it and the comparative quietude and restfulness of the ruralities upon the other side—suggesting indeed the turmoil upon our mortal side of the grave, and her immortal rest beyond it. Immediately across the silvered Hudson River extended the slopes of a country-place at which most of their childhood, during summer, had been passed. We called it Cragtangle Terrace, and Marcia had given this title to one of her stories. Yonder, therefore, was the direct suggestor of her mortal life. Beside them was the bier and the tomb-shelf: convincers of her dissolution and real entrance into life. You saw no morbid grief in-

pressed upon their faces. There was no useless mourning dress fashioned about their persons. Humanity indeed watered their eyes, and doubtless they reverently remembered the tributary tears at the grave of Lazarus; but the selfish regret at loss of companionship seemed to vanish when they remembered her gain and the mortal suffering from which she had found release. So, on the face of the summer firmament in that same hour, cloud-shade and sunshine flecked and changed. But there were most respectful, loving, and grateful glances showered upon the last resting-place of the once vivid clay. They had nothing of the faintest unpleasantness to remember concerning their aunt; yet a myriad recollections of her unselfish and affectionate companionship. They knew that, although departed, their aunt was thinking, feeling, acting still. Gone perhaps to instruct children in the better world. They knew that the breaking of the harp could not destroy the life of the lyrist who has last touched its strings; that this harpist has yet the power upon another instrument to utter more entrancing strains.

How few matured persons in society can truly say, "We know how to affiliate thought, action, and expression with the children!" Yet Marcia was conspicuous amid the few. And as each of the young people turned, when the vault-lock snapped oddly and suggestively upon the summer silence, it was toward their grandmother, in the most effective gestures of tributary affection, as if to say, "Take us in her earthly place."

XIX.

As for me—standing at the door of a cemetery vault, such as families in remembrance of the cave of Machpelah, appropriately maintain, I recalled and repeated this poem :

THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

The stars that shine
O'er day's decline
May tell the hour of love,
The balmy whisper in the leaves,
The golden moon above;
But vain the hour
Of softest power :
The moon is dark to thee,
My sister and my faithful one !
And oh ! her death to me !

In sickness aye I cried to her—
Her beauty and her kiss ;
For her my soul was loth to leave
So fair a world as this :
And glad was I when day's soft gold
Again upon me fell,
And the sweetest voice in all the world
Said, " Brother, art thou well ?"

She led me where the voice of streams
The leafy forest fills ;
She led me where the white sheep go,
O'er shining, turfy hills :
And when the gloom upon me fell,
Oh ! she, the fairest beam,
Led forth with silver leading-strings
My soul from darksome dream.

Now, sailing by, the butterfly
May through the lattice peer,
To tell the prime of summer-time,
The glory of the year ;
But ne'er for her—to death her eyes
Have given up their trust,
And I can not reach in the grave,
To clear them from the dust.

But in the skies, her pearly eyes,
The angels there have kissed,
And she hath dipped her sainted foot
In the sunshine of the blessed.
Eternal peace her ashes keep,
Who loved me through the past !
And may good Christ my spirit take,
To be with hers at last

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